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EXAMINER

CALDWELL, ANDREW T

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2154

DATE MAILED: 11/28/2001

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

T.R.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/189,410

Applicant(s)

Kuriki et al.

Examiner

Andrew Caldwell

Art Unit

2154

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE three MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Sep 10, 2001
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- *See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____ 20) ☐ Other:

Part III DETAILED ACTION

Remarks

1. Claims 1-27 are presented for examination.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 7, 14, and 21-22 are objected to under 35 C.F.R. 1.75(a) for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In claim 7 at line 5, the phrase *unit be stored* should be *unit to be stored*. In claim 14, the phrase *message is* should be *message are*. The clean copies of claims 21-22 contain brackets including text the Applicants probably intended to delete. For purposes of prior art rejections in this Office action, the bracketed language will be given no patentable weight.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
4. Claims 1-12 and 18-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Swenson et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,490,097.
5. Regarding claim 1, Swenson anticipates the claimed invention by disclosing an apparatus comprising:

a. A message management unit (Fig. 3 elems. 84, 86, 88 viewers) enabling a user at each of said plurality of terminals (Fig. 3 elems. 84a, 86a, 88a) to compose messages and to view and respond to received messages respectively (Col. 11 lines 19-24);

b. A preparation unit (Fig. 3 elem. 80a) preparing a receiver state list indicating states of a plurality of receivers of a message unit that is managed by said message management unit (Col. 8 lines 29-31; Col. 16 lines 36-54; Col. 17 lines 53-65).

6. Regarding claim 2, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the receiver state list includes completion information indicating whether the receivers have viewed the message or whether the receivers have completed business activities related to the message (Col. 16 lines 44-54).

7. Regarding claim 3, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the message management unit enables the content of the message and the receiver state list corresponding to the message to be displayed on a terminal screen in an associated manner (Col. 17 lines 4-9).

8. Regarding claim 4, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the receiver state list includes:

a. Open information indicating open states of the message of the plurality of receivers (Col. 16 lines 44-54 "active" as open information);

b. Completion information indicating whether the receivers have viewed the message or whether the receivers have completed

business activities related to the message (Col. 16 lines 44-54 "completed" as completion information).

9. Regarding claim 5, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus:

a. Further comprising a storage unit storing the content of the message, receivers' names and completion information indicating whether the receivers have viewed the message or whether the receivers have completed business activities related to the message, in an associated manner (Col. 8 lines 43-50);

b. Wherein the preparation unit prepares the receiver state list based on the receivers' names and the completion information (Col. 16 lines 44-54).

10. Regarding claim 6, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus further comprising:

a. An amendment unit amending the contents of a transmitted message stored in the storage unit (Col. 14 lines 52-67); and

b. A recovery unit recovering all the receivers' open information indicating an open state to a not-opened state when the message is amended by the amending unit (Col. 14 lines 52-67).

11. Regarding claim 7, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein:

a. The storage unit stores a plurality of comments prepared by the receivers in response to the message (Fig. 19 elem. 212; Col. 17 lines 8-13);

b. The recovery unit causes the comments stored in the storage unit [to] be stored without modification, when the transmitted message is amended by the amendment unit (Fig. 19 elem. 212; Col. 17 lines 8-13).

12. Regarding claim 8, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein:

a. The storage unit stores a message type of the message (Col. 16 lines 44-54 "actions" as message type); and

b. The preparation unit prepares the receiver state list according to the message type, the receivers' names and the completion information (Col. 17 lines 1-12).

13. Regarding claim 9, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus further comprising:

a. A setting unit displaying comment alternatives of comment patterns which correspond to the message type of the received message, in a comment section of the received message, and setting a comment pattern which corresponds to a comment alternative selected by the receiver as the receiver's comment to the received message (Fig. 19 elem. 212; Col. 17 lines 8-13);

b. Wherein the storage unit includes a comment pattern storage portion for storing, corresponding to the message type, the comment patterns and the comment alternative which correspond

respectively to the comment patterns (Fig. 19 elem. 212; Col. 17 lines 8-13).

14. Regarding claim 10, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the message management unit enables a sender and all receivers of the message to view the content of the message and the receiver state list on screens of the terminals (Col. 18 lines 3-10).

15. Regarding claim 11, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the message management unit provides a comment section for inputting a comment to the received message and causes the comment inputted to the comment section to be displayed as the comment of a corresponding receiver, in the receiver state list (Fig. 19 elem. 212; Col. 17 lines 8-13).

16. Regarding claim 12, Swenson teaches a message processing apparatus wherein the message management unit causes a delay state for a response time limit that is set in the message to be displayed as delay information in a received message list (Col. 21 lines 5-13).

17. Regarding claims 18-20, they are method claims corresponding to apparatus claim 1-3. Since they do not teach or define above the information in the corresponding apparatus claims, they are rejected under the same basis. The claims correspond as follows: 18 with 1, 19 with 2, 20 with 3.

18. Regarding claims 21-22, they are method claims corresponding to apparatus claims 1-2, respectively. Since they do not teach

or define above the information in the corresponding apparatus claims, they are rejected under the same basis. Please note that 19. Regarding claims 23 and 25-27, they are computer readable media claims corresponding to apparatus claims 1-4. Since they do not teach or define above the information in the corresponding apparatus claims, they are rejected under the same basis. The claims correspond as follows: 23 with 3, 25 with 1, 26 with 2, 27 with 4.

20. Regarding claim 24, it is a computer readable media claim corresponding to method claim 18. Since it does not teach or define above the information in the corresponding method claim, it is rejected under the same basis.

21. Claims 16-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Oichi, U.S. Patent No. 5,978,836.

22. Regarding claim 16, Oichi anticipates the claimed invention by disclosing an apparatus comprising:

a. A preparation unit for preparing a message list for displaying a formatted type message related to business activities and a non-formatted type of message not related to business activities, together with a message type (Col. 5 lines 23-37 showing email user receiving workflow message in inbox; Col. 19 lines 43-46 showing display of both workflow and

nonworkflow email; Col. 19 lines 49-52 email priorities as message types);

b. A message management unit managing information in the message list (Col. 4 lines 28-35 email client).

23. Regarding claim 17, it is a method claim corresponding to apparatus claim 16. Since it does not teach or define above the information in the corresponding apparatus claim, it is rejected under the same basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

24. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

25. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Swenson.

26. Regarding claim 15, Swenson teaches the invention substantially as claimed. See the rejection of claim 1 above. Swenson does not teach the additional limitations of claim 15. Swenson does however teach a display with an edit menu (Fig. 9 elem. 204). Official notice is hereby taken of the fact that edit menus commonly include a find option that allows for keyword searching. It would therefore have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching regarding keyword searching with the system

of Swenson because the resulting combination would allow a user to more efficiently find information of interest.

27. Claims 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Swenson in view of Williams, U.S. Patent No. 5,675,733.

28. Regarding claim 13, Swenson teaches the invention substantially as claimed. See the rejection of claim 1 above. Swenson does not teach the additional limitations of claim 13.

29. Williams on the other hand teaches a workflow system that collects and displays statistical information regarding each workflow, where the system comprises:

a. An open ratio obtaining unit obtaining an open ratio of the message from open information indicating an open state of the receiver of the message (Col. 1 line 65 to Col. 2 line 22 indicating types of notifications; Col. 5 lines 39-47 indicating that the COD embodiment is merely exemplary of how to implement other notifications, Col. 10 lines 1-22); and

b. A display unit displaying the open ratio of the message in a message list (Col. 11 lines 18-55).

30. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Williams' system for collecting and displaying statistics with the workflow system of Swenson. This combination would have been obvious

based on Williams teaching that its type of display is necessary as the volume of acknowledgment messages becomes large (Col. 2 lines 23-62).

31. Regarding claim 14, Swenson teaches the invention substantially as claimed. See the rejection of claim 1 above. Swenson does not teach the additional limitations of claim 14.

32. Williams on the other hand teaches a workflow system that collects and displays statistical information regarding each workflow, where the system comprises:

a. A completion ratio obtaining unit obtaining a completion ratio from completion information indicating that the receivers of the message have viewed the message, or that business activities related to the [message is] message are completed (Col. 2 lines 10-15); and

b. A display unit displaying the completion ratio which is obtained from the completion ratio obtaining unit in a message list (Col. 2 lines 10-15).

33. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Williams' system for collecting and displaying statistics with the workflow system of Swenson. This combination would have been obvious based on Williams teaching that its type of display is necessary as the volume of acknowledgment messages becomes large (Col. 2 lines 23-62).

Response to Arguments

34. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-27 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

35. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

36. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew Caldwell, whose telephone number is (703) 306-3036. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by phone fail, the examiner's supervisor, Meng-Ai An, can be reached at (703) 305-9678. Additionally, the fax numbers for Group 2100 are as follows:


Official Responses:	(703) 746-7239
After Final Responses:	(703) 746-7238
Draft Responses:	(703) 746-7240

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist at (703) 305-3900.

Andrew Caldwell
703-306-3036
November 19, 2001


ZARNI MAUNG
PRIMARY EXAMINER